



The Thriving Rhythms Project...

...challenges us to move with thoughtful purpose toward a deepened sense of identity—that we are spirited, creative, and connected people, called to be present, grateful, generous, and missional with our lives. We're exploring what it means to intentionally live into this particular series of life rhythms, which help us bring some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to each other as we encounter the world around us.

We are ... Spirited

As image bearers of the Divine, we are spirited human beings animated by the power of the Holy Spirit. We thrive as spirited people by affirming that we are inspired, animated, and enthused by the Source of all life and that every breath is a gift.

WELCOME | CHECK-IN |

Breath Exercise | Headspace | Breathe

Spend a few moments looking at this image:

- What gets your attention?
- What comes to mind as you explore this picture?
- How would you describe this image to someone who could not see it?
- What story does the picture tell you?
- Does this image draw you to God in any way?
- Where would you put yourself in this image?
- If this image produced sounds, what would they be like?



CENTERING | SPIRITED Thriving |

"Our first intense experience of the world comes through breathing—gasping for air. For the rest of our lives, this happens automatically, without conscious effort, handled by a respiratory control center at the base of the brain. We breathe an average of 28,000 times a day. But breath is more than a physiological function. It represents an interior, spiritual dimension of a life that is more than us. According to the Torah, God's breathing brought the first humans into existence, filling them with the "breath of life" *nishmat hayim*,

Genesis 2:7). Called by various names—*pneuma* [Greek], *ruach* [Hebrew], *prana* [Hindu], *chi* [Chinese], *nafas* [Arabic] —breath is a divine energy recognized across every religious tradition."

The Great Conversation: Nature and the Care of the Soul,
Belden C. Lane, Oxford University Press, page 51)



ANCIENT WISDOM | JOB 33:4

"The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." Job 33:4

STORY | Kiteology

The kite is a common symbol used in many cultures worldwide during the seasons of Lent and Easter. For example, in Haiti, *Monte Kap* is the word for kite, which means 'to be lifted up.' Haitian children fly kites at Easter as visual symbols of hope and promise, often scarce in their daily context. Haitian kites are not usually made of beautifully colored material but from plastic grocery bags, sticks, string, and a stone with a hole to weigh it down. In Greece and Cyprus, children associate kite flying with Lent. In Grenada, kites are flown on Good Friday.

In Guyana, kites are flown as an activity by all ethnic and religious groups and were probably imported by Chinese plantation workers nearly 3000 years ago. They have always been a symbol of spring. This practice draws people together as kites appear in the sky in the weeks leading up to Easter, and school children are taken to parks and taught to fly them. This culminates in an airborne celebration on Easter Monday. Flying kites symbolize the Risen Christ and are, in some sense, being *Monte Kap* — lifted up!

Today, whether or not there is a religious or spiritual connection, kite flying on or around Easter is a common practice of welcoming spring and acknowledging the animating

power of the wind. The simple joy of watching something as inanimate as a piece of paper, plastic, or fabric stretched over a crossbeam of wood become animated by something invisible creates a deep sense of inspiration and enthusiasm for young and old alike.

The sight of kites flying in the breeze becomes a visual reminder that, as children of God, we are spirited human beings; the power of the Holy Spirit animates us. We thrive as spirited people by affirming that we are inspired, animated, and enthused by the Source of all life and that every breath is a gift.



SPIRITED CONVERSATION

- Breath is something that we all have in common. Share a story, any story, from your life that involves breathing – perhaps a moment that "took your breath away."
- Have you ever felt keenly aware of being animated by or especially moved by the power of the Spirit? If so, share that experience. How can we become more aware of the Holy Spirit's presence in us?
- Recall a time when your circumstances left you feeling deflated. What filled you back up?
- How might your life be different if you recognized every breath as a gift?
- Think of a time when something inspired you. What was it, why did it inspire you, and how did it impact you?
- How does recognizing yourself as a "spirited human being, filled with the breath of the Divine" help you feel connected with God as you understand God, one another, and all of creation?
- Brainstorm a list of practical ways to thrive as a spirited person. Then, share and celebrate how you are thriving as a spirited person. What is one idea you can take away from this conversation to help you grow as a spirited person?

A SPIRITED MANIFESTO

We believe we are spirited human beings, filled with the breath of the Divine. We believe that inspiration comes from beyond us and that being animated by the Spirit can have a transformative effect on others. We believe that we can experience the true wonder of what it means to be enthused by the Source of all life, and we believe that every breath we breathe is a gift.

MANTRA

As a child of God, I am a spirited human being animated by the power of the Spirit.

INTENTION

Gracious God, we are your spirited people; you have created us in your image and called us into a community together. As we dwell in the fullness of this moment, we acknowledge your generous love that frees us to be your missional people in the world. Inspire our creativity, animate our relationships, and enthuse us with your Spirit. In the name of Christ... Amen

BLESSING

As you move through this day and the days ahead, may you thrive as a spirited child of God filled with the breath of God. May you know the joy of inspiration and the thrill of holy animation. May you experience the true wonder of what it means to be enthused by the Source of all life and that every breath you breathe is a gift. And may you walk into that one big, beautiful, funky, ancient-future, poetic, delicious, complicated, expansive, ever-widening, and wonder-filled mystery of the Spirit of the Holy One who first breathed life into you.

